

THE WINTER

Saturday, October 30, 1859.



"She could not bear to part with it, and no wonder."—p. 51.

IN DUTY BOUND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN," "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "A BRAVE LIFE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER X.—"THIS UNLUCKY BUSINESS."

WE left Sir Frederic discussing with Mr. Sibley the matter of the Ormonds' estate. If the brother and sister were orphans, there was all the more reason that justice should be done them.

Sir Frederic was an orphan too, and wore deep mourning. By the death of his father he had just come into the estate.

"Justice! why, my dear patron—"

"Keep to the point, sir; keep to the point," said Sir Frederic impatiently. "We were discussing the Ormonds."

"Exactly," continued the agent, with undisturbed equanimity, "exactly. Oh, I was saying," and he turned to Mr. Easton, "there is a tall big fellow, six feet high. You must know him—Luke Ormond."

Mr. Easton shook his head. The meadow farm, as it was called, was not in the parish of East Bramley.

"I don't so much wonder at your not knowing Luke, either," resumed the agent; "he goes out very little indeed. I believe he hates going out. He is generally lying all his length on a sofa in his study, as he calls it, at the back of the house. That is where you will find Luke."

"Is he an invalid?"

"Not a bit of it!"

"Who manages the farm, then?"

"My dear Mr. Easton, I am surprised at you, and a little shocked. Do you mean to say that you are in ignorance of Kate Ormond's existence? Pretty little nimble, bewitching Kate? Why, there is not such a wonderful little woman in the county!"

Mr. Easton shook his head again, this time with a gesture of impatience. There was something in the man's false smile and absurd antics which provoked him.

"It is Kate who manages the farm, and makes the butter, and looks up the eggs, and feeds the poultry, and rears the calves. Dear me! what a Kate it is!" and the agent lifted up his hands in admiration—a gesture which nearly cost him an overthrow; for his horse, feeling the reins slackened, took the opportunity of shying viciously at a stone, and half capsizing him.

Sir Frederic laughed good-naturedly. "I tell Sibley he's a single man, why doesn't he propose?"

"I daren't for my life; she's too good for me by half!" said Sibley, shrugging his shoulders.

"At any rate, you have my message to convey to her. Perhaps, as the young gentleman is so fond of his siesta, he allows his sister to transact all the business," said Sir Frederic, in a tone of railly.

"And we will ride over the land and discuss what is to be done if Sibley fails in his diplomacy," continued the baronet, addressing Mr. Easton.

"With all my heart!"

Nothing delighted Mr. Easton more than the prospect of getting rid of the agent.

Besides, he wanted to ask Sir Frederic to lunch, and he would not force himself to extend the invitation to Mr. Sibley. Not on any account whatever!

He wished to introduce Sir Frederic to his daughter. He scarcely knew why he felt this sudden desire of extending the circle of her acquaintance.

The question seemed to haunt him with strange persistence.

Why should not Adela marry?

Sir Frederic had only been in the neighbourhood a month. During that period he had seen and spoken to him several times on business; and Sir Frederic seemed rather to court his society.

The young man was quite unaccustomed to business. Some said he was a mere tool in the hands of Sibley. The place he had come to reside in was a grim old tower, which had been neglected for years and years. The Mortons rarely lived there, or, indeed, paid it a passing visit. They had a far better residence in the south of England—a splendid baronial hall, where they lived in magnificence, and held quite a court. But the young man had disliked the place since his father died, and had shut up the court, and beaten a retreat.

He wanted to retrench, he said, and look a little into his own affairs.

Perhaps he thought Mr. Easton might be useful to him.

"He did not care for gaiety—he had had enough," he said, as, after a time, they rode slowly back to East Bramley. "All he wanted was a quiet domestic life, and leisure to improve his rather shattered resources. The estate had been drained almost to death. He wanted to nurse it back to life again.

He was very open and candid, and made no secret of his intentions.

He was going back to lunch with Mr. Easton. He had accepted the invitation immediately. In a few weeks an aunt was coming to live with him. Then he could return the hospitality, and he hoped they should be neighbours.

Lunch was set out on the dining-room table when they entered. The machinery of the household went by the clock; but Adela was not there. Indeed, Mr. Easton had to chafe impatiently some five minutes before she came in.

She wore a black silk dress, with an attempt at slight mourning. Her face was pale, and her eyes bore unmistakable marks of weeping.

"That," he thought—and again he could have ground his teeth as he thought it—"that was because of Margaret's child!"

Ah, well! He would put an end to that scheme, as soon as his guest was gone.

He wished Adela were not so cold and distant in her manner. He had never been struck with it before. As a hostess she was graceful and attentive, and let no one punctilio escape; but there seemed a wall of ice round her which kept off the least approach to sociability.

Was it his fault? He thought he would give her a hint at some convenient moment. He longed to whisper to her—"Bend, Adela; bend!"

But before that came an affair of far greater importance.

"Stay, Adela," said he, when the baronet had taken his departure, and Adela was about to leave the room; "I have a word to say to you."

She came back slowly, her eyes fixed on the ground.

"It is about this—this unlucky business," he said, a little embarrassed; for he was strictly a man of his word.

Adela raised her eyes. They had a troubled expression—a look of alarm.

"You took me by surprise, Adela; I had not time to fully discuss the point. I have made up my mind since that the step was unwise. I am not willing that you should adopt this child."

"It is too late," she said, hurriedly; "the child is here."

"What, so soon!" and his tone was angry and displeased. "You made haste, then, to take me at my word."

She did not speak. He walked up and down the room with a disturbed air. At length he came back to where she stood, her eyes cast down, her face pale and troubled.

"Where does this woman lodge?" he asked.

He would not let the word "Margaret" escape his lips.

She did not look up; she was downcast and dejected, more so than he had ever seen her. And she did not see the expression of his face. It was well she did not. He was grappling with a suggestion that he hated.

"Has she gone?" he asked presently, and with some anxiety, still grappling with the idea that he loathed—still forced right upon it.

There was a sound like that of a stifled sob.

"She is not likely to be gone, considering the state in which I left her."

And Adela turned hastily round and departed, scarce in time enough to hide a flood of tears.

CHAPTER XL

TOO LATE.

He looked after her with some surprise. Adela did not often weep. Then he thought, come what might, he would have his way about this thing. Better weep now, than shed tears of regret ever after.

He did not order out his horse again, and yet he was going to East Bramley. He would slip down silently and unperceived; no one should be any the wiser. If he were compelled to see Margaret, he must. The interview should be brief as possible. He would offer her an allowance on condition that she took back her child and went—on condition that he neither saw nor heard of her again, or of it. But though he was fierce, and cruel, and unrelenting, there was a corner of his heart where some softness lingered.

He had a dream now and then, of a beautiful and prosperous woman, with children's faces round her. This was his Margaret. The other Margaret

was a changeling, thrust into her place—a dwarfed, elfish thing, who had disobeyed him, and whom he refused to love. He loved the first Margaret, and secretly yearned after her. Not that any one guessed it. The man was stern as could be; his face was set like a flint.

He walked down to East Bramley, taking the same route that she had done. His footprints might have touched hers. He had the address in his hand. Adela had laid it on the table, and he had taken it up. He knew the row of little houses near the station; but he did not know Mrs. Mason. The woman had lately come to the town. He did not flinch from his purpose when he came to the door; he was even more resolved than ever. What should he call her? He must give her the name he hated. He must ask for Mrs. Seymour.

The door was not opened all at once. He grew impatient, and knocked again. Then a woman opened it—a woman with a kind, motherly look, very pale, and her eyes brimming over with tears. The sight irritated him. It was like these women to go fretting after Margaret. A couple of simpletons! But he asked for her, and as he did so, he slipped into the passage. "The sooner this scene is over the better." He was getting harder rather than softer.

"She is gone, sir, poor thing," said the woman, putting her apron to her eyes, "and more's the pity for it. Do you belong to her, sir?"

"No!"

He said it fiercely, and he thought he spoke the truth. She had once belonged to him, but not now!

"I am sorry for that. If ever a poor thing wanted friends she did. You see she wasn't fit to go; she had been up all night. I heard her up and down, and crying over the child. Ah, it was a sweet one!" and the woman paused at the recollection. "She could not bear to part with it, and no wonder," again the apron went to the eyes. "Ah, it ain't long for this world!"

"You think it will die?" said Mr. Easton, hastily.

"I think it may be too good to live, sir," replied the woman. "Its mother has done what she could, poor thing. She's torn herself away from it that it might have a home with the lady, and a chance for its life. Ah, no one knows what it cost her to do so!"

He was listening. He was vexed and disappointed beyond measure that she had escaped him; but he listened.

"She bore up wonderful. I shall not forget it soon, sir," and tears gushed to her eyes; "she had scarce had bit or sup since she came into the house. I made her a cup of tea, but there it stands untouched. I fetched her down here, thinking it would be more cheerful, and the room isn't let. See, poor dear, she has left her handkerchief."

His eyes glanced at the bit of cambric as she laid it on the table. It was wet with tears.

"I wasn't here when the parting took place; but I saw the lady go out with the child in her arms. The child looked frightened, and cried out, 'Mamma! mamma!' I thought she would hear it, and I went in as quick as quick; but, bless you, she could hear nothing. She was stretched on the floor as if she was dead!"

He moved uneasily in his chair; not a single feeling, if he had one, struggled to the surface.

"Where is she gone to?" he asked, at length.

"Goodness knows, sir! She should not have gone if I could have helped it. When she was better, I made her sit on that sofa. She trembled all over like a child; and her face was so white, and her eyes so strange, it quite frightened me. Between ourselves, sir, if she's found at the bottom of the nearest pond—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted he, sternly. "What are you talking about?"

"I don't care, sir. I know trouble often drives folks desperate, and God, in mercy, takes away their senses. I had a sister once—"

"Nonsense, I tell you!" said he, more sternly still, and rising as he said it. "So you cannot give me any information?"

"I can't, sir. She slipped out of the house when my back was turned. My husband, he saw her go by the end of the street, as if she were distracted like. I told him he should have gone after her; but men don't take the heed of things that women do; and he wanted his dinner. Anyhow, she's gone, sir—more's the pity for it!"

"She's gone!"

He repeated it as he walked down the street. It was too late, then—too late!

He could not help but wonder where she was gone to. He could not help but think of the untasted cup of tea, and the handkerchief wet with tears!

CHAPTER XII.

RUTH'S CHOICE OF FRIENDS.

HAVE you never basked in the glory of an early summer's morning, and noticed, all at once, a speck on the horizon? That speck, getting larger and larger still, proclaimed—no matter the sunshine, and the bees, and the flowers, no matter the brilliant beginning—"It will be rain to-day."

There had come a speck on Horace Vincent's horizon. It was not large at present, and he tried not to notice it. He never alluded to the blunder committed by his wife. It was brought home to him, nevertheless.

"Well, I am sure!" said Mrs. Jules, meeting him in the street shortly after. "You took us all by surprise, Mr. Vincent. Till I received your cards, I had not the least idea you were thinking about matrimony."

Horace said a few pacificatory words.

The lady, who boasted that she gave the *tone* to the East Bramley society, bridled and nodded, and was evidently very much offended.

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing the bride. You will bring her to call; I hope I shall not be engaged!"

Her manner of pronouncing the word, and the distant bow which took the place of the cordial shake of the hand, convinced Horace of the exact position in which he stood.

"I have lost Mrs. Jules for ever!" said he, as he gazed somewhat mournfully after her. For with Mrs. Jules was the best connection in the county.

The rattle of a pair of ponies made him turn his head.

"There is another of my lost friends," thought he, as he caught sight of Miss Easton.

She stopped her ponies the minute she saw him.

"Mr. Vincent, allow me to congratulate you! I must own I was surprised, too; but you will care little about that," said she, laughing.

The tone of voice was so cordial and friendly, that the poor young man was quite touched. He began the same pacificatory speech he had attempted with Mrs. Jules, but Adela scarcely heard him out. Her clear dark eyes, which were looking straight into his, deciphered the cause of his embarrassment. She had a generous temper, and was above small affronts; and she felt very kindly towards the young bride.

"You must bring her to see me," said she; "I want to make her acquaintance."

Nothing she could have done was of more value to Horace than this little speech. He hurried home, quite in spirits.

"You must put on your best bib and tucker, my dear," said he, cheerfully; "I am going to take you a drive in the country to-morrow."

"Where are you going to? Oh, I shall like it so much!"

"To Bramley Hall, to call on the Eastons."

Her countenance fell immediately.

"Are we obliged to call there? Can't we go a drive without?"

"People in our circumstances must kill two birds with one stone, my dear," said he, laughing.

She sat still a few minutes. The shade of self-will was creeping over her face.

"I don't want to call on the Eastons, Horace, I don't like them."

"Why not, Ruth?"

"For no specific reason. Only because I don't."

"But that is childish of you, Ruth."

She was silent; yet none the more was she convinced, as you could see by her face.

"They are old friends of mine," continued Horace. "I had introductions to them, and to Mrs. Jules; to no other people in the neighbourhood."

"I dislike Mrs. Jules more than I do the Eastons."

He sighed. He could not help it. Nor could he argue the point any more. Dinner was brought in, such as it was; and he was obliged to eat it with such contentment as he possessed.

I say "such as it was" advisedly. Dinners were among the hints which were being given to him daily that he had made a mistake. He was no epicure. The simplest fare would have sufficed him, so that it was prepared with comfort and cleanliness. But his fare was not simple. Now and then it was beyond his means. But it was never presentable. Never even what Mrs. Perkins would have set before him. Nor was his home-disorderly, slovenly, and ill-managed—any great improvement on his lodgings.

He was being forced into this belief against his will.

When dinner was over he went away. He was resolved to carry his point; but he hated arguing. He would say nothing about it till the morning.

"Very well," said Ruth, when he told her what time the carriage would be at the door.

He was delighted. He hurried through his business, and got home just in time to see the carriage drive up. He had some little toilette to make, so he ran up-stairs, expecting to find Ruth. But no Ruth was there. When he was ready, he looked about him for his wife.

"What in the world has become of her?" said he, ringing the bell in the little sitting-room below. "Where is your mistress?" asked he of the slatternly girl who presented herself.

"Oh, please sir, I quite forgot! The missis is gone."

"Gone! Where?"

"Please sir, I was to tell you, as she'd rather not, and she's gone a ride with Mrs. Mudford."

Horace stood immovable. A sterner look came into his face than had ever been seen there yet. He was very angry indeed.

What should he do? His first impulse was to

dismiss the carriage, and abandon the Eastons altogether. But another idea suggested itself to his mind.

It was evident that he and his wife would go different ways.

If he went his way, need he go utterly alone? Could he afford to let all his old friends forsake him? Could he? The man was grieved to the very heart: he could have sat down and wept. He thought he would go. Come what might, his schemes should not be entirely frustrated! He stepped into the carriage, and ordered the man to drive to Bramley Hall.

Adela and her father were both at home, and received him with the utmost kindness. Adela had great tact. She passed over the fact of his wife's absence so lightly and gracefully, that nothing was made of it. She kept him to lunch; and when he was ready to depart, she said, "I was going to write a note; but we need not be so very formal. Could you and Mrs. Vincent dine with us on Thursday?"

He accepted the invitation joyfully. It was welcome as a shower in summer. He had his way to make, and could afford to lose no friends. And he was attached strongly to the Eastons. He had even once thought—But that was some time ago, and his thoughts had never come to anything. Still, he was joyful. There was no vindictiveness whatever about Horace. All trace of resentment at his wife's conduct had disappeared. He thought she would be pleased and gratified. She should be dressed nicely in her dove-coloured silk, and wear the chain he gave her, and the little bridal-wreath in her hair. She would look very lovely; he was sure of that. And when she had made the acquaintance of Adela, what an advantageous step that would be—all, in fact, that was wanting to his felicity.

Might he not, in the end, be able to pacify Mrs. Jules?

(To be continued.)

REMEMBRANCES OF JESUS.

John xiv. 26.

ONE of the most curious of those common occurrences which beset us so frequently that, at length, they come and pass by unnoticed, is this. Sometimes—it may be in the midst of our most ordinary round of life; it may be in some exceptional circumstance or combination of circumstances—a sort of consciousness seems to flash across us that this has occurred before. A sensation comes upon us that we have once, we cannot tell when, where, or how, been placed exactly in the same position as we now occupy, have said the same things, seen the same people,

the same localities, or what not. The flash is but momentary; it comes and is gone. Perhaps we think nothing further about it, or—according to the humour we are in—we do think about it, and are exceedingly puzzled to guess how things could be so. We never have been in that same position, at least as far as our ordinary memory serves us to recall the past; and yet there it was—a sort of supernatural memory seems to have stood us in stead for the moment, and revealed to us glimpses of a profounder past than we can commonly grasp. This is very strange; but is not all memory a strange mystery?—strange that events once dead should rise up from their graves, and live over



again in their effects on our minds!—strange that the smitten string, smitten years ago, should vibrate still, often echoing on till that string is snapped for ever! Yes. Memory, thou daily mystery; thou resurrection, wherein the past starts up to life again; thou spring-tide, wherein the fallen leaves of autumn bud out again, and the singers whose voices have been hushed in death's winter break out once more in wild, unearthly melody. Like all life's varied faculties, thou hast a double aspect, O Memory! There is that which is a blessing and a comfort thus to recall to new life: but there is that too which would make the fabled Lethe river a very stream of life: there is much that it would be a luxury to *forget!*

And there are cases where memory is not only not a curse, not only a luxury and a comfort, but an actual necessity. It is all that some men have to live upon. The very poor, for instance, when life dwindles down into mere vegetation, as it were; into the bare fact of physical existence; all its joys and garnitures dropped off; and friends (as is sure to be the case) dropped away too. What relic of happiness have these people left to live with, in such a case? They have, perhaps, the memory of earlier and happier days; of blithe childhood, reckless of riches or of poverty. Or they have what is better still, that reversal of memory, the hope of heaven; yet still based upon remembrance of the past, upon the wondrous life which He, the poor man in Judea, lived for them, to type their own dark life, and its happy issue in heaven!

The bereaved too. Death goes to his dark work, and rudely strips the green leaves from the Tree of Life. Bare and wintry amid a glowing summer of the world's joy stand the branches of the sufferer's existence. Could he live without the memory of his beloved—his bright ones? No, on the tinted canvas of memory their portraits are painted in, for him, unfading colours. He sees them not as they were here, in their imperfections and weaknesses, but as they are there in the plenitude of power and beauty. The resurrection-change of memory has passed upon them, and like angels, they throng the desert rounds of life's ladder.

There was a time when this fact—fact as it always is—was more intensely true than ever; when the brethren thronged the sides of the Mount of Ascension, and saw the Blessed One gradually fading from their stretched and eager gaze; when they passed down as the cloud received him out of their sight, and anon began to go on their separate routes, solitary scriptless missionaries of the Gospel, then they perceived the full potency of that spell which memory does throw around life's barrenness, making it to bloom and blossom as the rose.

Dazzled, amazed, bowed down by the miracle of power, symbolised in the outpouring of the Pentecostal fire-tongues, there was yet a gentler miracle of the Comforter's operations for them to be made aware of when, by the bleak sea-shore of life's solitude, the caves of memory echoed the treasured words of Jesus to their listening hearts. This, the truest operation of the Comforter—the Spirit of the Peace! This was like the still, small voice succeeding the fire and the whirlwind, and speaking God more really present. The gift of tongues that came down that wondrous day of Pentecost would serve them in their nomadic life to hold intercourse with their fellow-men; but, in the sweet new language of memory, they could commune with their Lord in heaven! Grand and stately were the gifts whereby, as apostles and disciples, they found themselves linked to their Saviour whilst he was in those glorious mansions which his victory over death had opened to Him: they still treading the defiles of death's dark valley of the shadow. But, as men, the man Christ Jesus, their old friend, their beloved associate, came back to them upon the radiant and gently hovering wing of memory.

Thus did all that dear old past live over again for them. Amid the suns of the South, or the snows of the unkindly North, those happy months spent with Jesus in their native Eastern land came back, and kept them straight to their onward course, as the unseen impetus drives the arrow straight to its mark. They lived for him; and very much because they lived *with him*.

Apart from all higher, all supernatural methods of presence, the Lord walked hand in hand with them thus on their seemingly barren and solitary paths. Thus did he stand by them when they were cast to the wild beasts; thus, on the blazing pyre, when the flame enwrapped them in its cruel winding-sheet. Perhaps even holy Stephen was but transcribing a page of earthly memory when, amid the hailstorm of persecution, he saw the Lord Jesus standing and saying to those fierce waves, "Peace, be still."

And for us, in our worldly wayfaring, do we not feel how largely we have to subsist on memories of the Lord Jesus? He is up amid the heights of yon blue abysses—far beyond the most distant star that lights up the illumined streets of night's dark city—and we are down here to do his work until we too soar up as he did from Bethany. In a hundred different ways does his love keep unbroken our communion with him. But, perhaps, of all the operations of his Comforter, his Spirit of Peace, none is more gentle—yet effectual—than that master-spell of memory!

We spoke just now of that strange kind of memory which, as far as we can discern, has no basis in fact, and yet which certainly is memory. The

gross fact has faded; but the memory, the ethereal, perhaps the essential part of the fact remains. It bursts upon the mind unbidden. Such is *conversion to God*—the first effort of the divine energy at work in the soul of man.

When spring-tide comes over earth, and all Nature, waking from its winter's sleep, is astir with new life, do we not sometimes follow in our thoughts the little colourless seed far down in the dark earth, and think how it is even now putting forth its delicate green shoots; or do we not track the course of the wondrous sap down to its centre in the very heart of the great oak-tree, and ask, How does this stirring, this uprising, upheaving of life originate? When does the pulse of life first begin to throb? More mysterious still is the earliest convulsive throe of conversion in the heart. It comes oftentimes like that inexplicable thrill of memory, unbidden, unexpected, when least looked for.

But to pass to more ordinary memory. True, we have never looked upon the Lord Jesus in the body. We have never had him made an object of sense as the first disciples had. But that is just the point: therein lies much of the difference between the things of the body and the things of the Spirit. In spiritual matters, faith, not sight, constitutes fact. We have known Jesus, however slightly, by faith. We have, at least, heard, read, thought something about him. There were infinitely varying degrees of nearness to him existing amongst his first disciples, from John, who was with him almost from the first to the very last, down to the penitent thief, the duration of whose discipleship can scarce be reckoned by a larger unit than minutes. So it is with us. Yet to all has faith brought home, in some degree, the fact of the Saviour's existence, earthly life, and heavenly attributes. For us the pages of the Gospel form a sort of *transcribed memory*. The question is, Do those memories often recur to us, or do we go out into the world, and act, speak, think, irrespectively of them?

Far off as our outer lives may necessarily be from God, these memories of Jesus ought to haunt us. They should stand thickly there, like churches in the streets of a great city. If we would not limit life to the getting and spending of money, eating, drinking, and sleeping, there must sometimes be an effort of memory made on behalf of Jesus. These memories do haunt the holy man; they make his life what it is. Deeply as he may be engrossed in the pursuits of the world, he still leaves room for the remembrances of the Saviour. The church and the mart stand side by side. Amidst all the bustle, din, and noise of the world's traffic, the Comforter's work goes silently on, and his work is this: he "brings to remembrance the words of the Lord Jesus."

Let us try ourselves often by this test. Take up a day, an hour, as it were, into our hand, and examine how far it has been affected by memories of our ascended Saviour.

We should do well to act thus even in regard to earthly relationships sometimes; to probe any one action or course of proceeding on our part, and see how far it was dictated by a consideration for others whom it is our duty to consider, how far our thoughts were centralised on self when we entered upon it. It would check many a word or work, which, even if not so far selfish as to be bad, was so far as to be useless. Some piece of extravagance or self-indulgence, or some act that may possibly turn out painful to others, whom we have no wish, and no right, to distress.

But very chiefly should we try life thus in reference to God and our Saviour. Take any day of our life, and ask, How much have we thought therein upon heaven? Have we thought at all about that Saviour who thought so deeply for us, whose heart and whose body bled for us, and our sins and sorrows? When the hasty word rose up to our lips, did a thought that, to give way would vex God's Holy Spirit, check the inconsiderate utterance? Did the majestic Jesus seem to stand by with that eloquent silence which marked him before the scurrilous ruler; did he seem to lay his scarred hand on our mouth, and say to the storm of passionate language, "Peace, be still?" Would half the harsh things be said, the angry letters written, the unkind actions done, if the Comforter, the Spirit of Peace, were more largely and more freely admitted into man's heart, bringing with him, as oil cast upon the waves of life, those remembrances of Jesus which are so powerful to charm man's fierce and turbulent spirits, and stop the floodgates of evil speaking, even when they are on the point of bursting forth, and carrying all before them? Did evil thoughts assail us—dark, wicked thoughts, which we would not dare to let our fellow-men dream of, and which we are intending to hide in the darkness, and carry out in secret wicked deeds; and then, did a remembrance of the pure Saviour come upon us like a ray of God's light in a dark and dismal place? If so (and I believe there are few who have not felt this), do we not know that we were unable to commit the meditated sin? We put out the very thought of it, like a hateful visitor of whom we were ashamed, with a burning blush on our face; though none save Christ and the angels were there to see. Oh, how that Saviour and those angels do wrestle before they let one sin! What a battle we have before we can get over being ashamed of ourselves! How the young man has to do violence to his better nature, before he can fall for the first time! What are these throes and struggles but remembrances of

Jesus, and all his pure and chaste example that has been instilled into us in childhood? We do despite to it perhaps. The Holy Spirit drops his hands (for, remember, he strives not always), good angels go up dispirited, not to forget, but to hope on for us, to strive to reclaim, since they have failed to restrain. And, perhaps, not until life has sped far into the ways and works of sin, perhaps sped far towards the last limits of its earthly span, do we become cognisant of the fact that angels were about us, and that we had to thrust the memory of Jesus from us ere we first could bring ourselves to offend.

Apart from all figurative language, do we not feel that, if we thought more of Jesus our lives would be more like his? Do we not feel that to think of his good servants gone before, makes us at least try to follow in their footsteps? A young man could not go and sin with the memory of his dead mother fresh in his mind. He must banish, push out by main force, the image of those silver hairs, and the last fixed glance which met his from her dying eyes, the last tearful look he threw on the marble face in the coffin. He must put these chastening thoughts rudely and roughly from him before he can join the multitude to do evil. And so too, though we do it so habitually that at last we do it unconsciously and without effort, we have to push this blessed Gospel from us, to expel that written remembrance of the Lord Jesus from our minds before we can give ourselves to sin. We cannot think of him in his ascended nature, girt with the adoring denizens of the seventh heaven, and straightway go and wallow in the filth of earthly corruption. Unheavenly as we may be, we cannot but be disgusted with ourselves when the contrast stands out so prominently.

Still less, perhaps, can we think of that martyr life where not a thought was centralised on self, but all given to us; think of the marred image, the agony of body and mind, that marked the Saviour's walk through this world of sorrows, and straightway go and be selfish, be sensual, be all that he was not. Therefore let us foster these holy remembrances, which it is one portion of the Spirit's work to bring to our mind. They come not thither by chance, come not without a meaning. They come as that burst of unearthly music came to the shepherds while they watched their flocks by night. Let us open our ears, nay, rather open our hearts to them. They will fill life with sweetness. The remembrance of Jesus will form a contrast to all life's necessary littleness, its besetting infirmities. They are the Spirit's antidote to the rude joys of the flesh.

Memories of Jesus warmly welcomed, ever cherished, shall leaven life into his image. They shall form a hidden resource for us, of which the world around shall not reck. Remembering how he was poor, and smitten, and despised, we shall be content to be all these too, and the coarse carnal world shall wonder why we bear our ills so equably.

And having been our life-long solace, it may be—we cannot tell, but it has often struck me that it may be so—that these remembrances of Jesus so long pent up here, shall form the subject of that which it may be our blessedness at last to learn, that song which shall gush forth from the vast choir of the saved, and whose words shall be dark to all but those who have remembered Jesus, plain and spontaneous to those who have made his memory their chief source of joy here on earth.

H A Y - M A K I N G :

AN ENGLISH IDYL.

I. FORENOON.

H N the deep and fragrant meadow,
By the brink of sunny waters,
Where the trees fling grateful shadow,
Throng the hamlet's sons and daughters.

Every hand in willing labour
Tosses out the new-mown treasure;
Every lad finds some fair neighbour—
Loving words make work a pleasure.
Men with muscles braced and brawny;
White-haired ancients tottering, stooping;
Girls whose sun-kissed brows are tawny;
Children rolling, laughing, whooping.

So they pass the breezy morning
On Old England's merry soil,
Till the noon tide sun gives warning
"Tis the hour to rest from toil.

Hark! the bell's ringing

In clear music flows,

Pleasantly bringing

The midday repose.

'Neath the trees by the river

Where cool is the shade,

While the hot sunbeams quiver,

The noon meal is spread.



II. AFTERNOON.

Now the sylvan task renewing,
See them all again hay-making;
Some are gathering, some are strewing,
Some are tossing, some are raking.

Here a joyous lad is shouting,
There rings out a maiden's laughter,
Now a girl flies, coyly pouting,
While her lover follows after.

Little toddlers romp and rollick,
Rolling till they well-nigh smother,
Flinging in light-hearted frolic
Fragrant armfuls o'er each other.

Thus the hours move onward sprightly,
Sport and labour blend together;
As the trooping clouds scud lightly
'Cross the sun in autumn weather.

Sweet bells now pealing
The dreamy air fill;
Soft shadows stealing
Creep o'er the hill.

From labour reposing,
Light laughter and song,
With day's mellow closing,
Float faintly along.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.

THE DIAMOND RING.

PART I.

"WHAT'S the matter, Gertrude? I'm sure something is troubling you;" and the speaker wound her arm affectionately round her companion's waist, as she turned to close the door of the little bedroom. "You are not clever at hiding anything, Gerty," she added; "I saw something had happened, as soon as I came in, but was afraid to ask before your aunt."

"Do I really look so anxious?" asked Gertrude, a little startled. "I did not know it. I would not have aunt notice it for anything."

"But you will tell me, darling, your sister—at least, almost," she added, archly. "You would tell John, would you not, if he had not been called away upon that tiresome business? so you can tell his sister. Has it anything to do with Edward?" she asked.

Gertrude shivered, and for answer buried her face in the pillow and sobbed violently. Alice Lester watched her in silence for a minute, looking pityingly at the black-draped, bowed figure, and thinking how early poor Gertrude's sorrows had begun, and wishing that her brother could at once remove his darling from the cold, ungentle aunt with whom she was now obliged to live.

"Come, come, Gerty, you must not cry any more," she said, at length rousing herself from her reverie. "Tell me what scrape Edward has managed to get into now."

"Oh, I don't know, sobbed Gertrude; "but he has written to ask me for five pounds, and says he shall be ruined if I do not send it soon."

"What does he want it for?"

"I don't know; some old debt, I fancy. I know he owed money before mamma died, but he has been more steady since."

"Could you not ask your aunt to advance your

next quarter's allowance?" said Alice, after a few minutes' deliberation.

"Oh, no, Alice, you do not know aunt; she is always talking at me for being such an expense to her, and—and I have promised to give her the five pounds every quarter to pay my expenses."

"But, Gerty, what are you going to do for clothes and pocket-money, if your aunt takes all your allowance—the annuity left you by your father?"

"I have plenty of clothes, Alice, dear—enough to last me for years I should think; but I should like to be able to help—" Here her aunt's voice was heard, calling her to come down-stairs. "We must go, Alice," she said, hastily wiping the traces of tears from her face, "and be sure you keep my secret."

That evening, when Alice reached home, Mrs. Lester complained of a pain in her head. By her daughter's advice she retired to rest early, but the next morning was much worse, and in some alarm Alice sent a telegram to inform her brother of their mother's alarming symptoms. He set out immediately upon receiving it; but before he could reach home she was insensible, and the doctors had given up all hope of her recovery. Gertrude was with Alice, watching by the bedside of his dying mother—indeed, she seemed to have suddenly changed from the clinging dependent girl to the grave helpful woman, to whom they must now cling in their hour of sorrow and trial.

"Oh, John, I don't know what I should have done without Gerty!" said Alice; "it seems as though she knew exactly what to do."

"Dear Gertrude," murmured the young man, glancing back at the youthful figure. "But you must go and lie down now, Alice; you are almost worn out."

"You will call me if there is the slightest change, John?"

"Yes, dear; but Nurse does not think there will be to night, so try to go to sleep at once."

But in less than an hour after this, Nurse roused her, saying she must come at once to her mother's bedside. Slipping on a thin dressing-gown, Alice prepared at once to follow, and even then was scarcely in time to see the last breath drawn, the last sigh heaved, so rapidly had the change come on. Overwhelmed with grief, John led her from the room.

"No—no, let me stay; Nurse will want some help," she sobbed, "and we cannot send for anybody else at this time of night."

"Then Gertrude will stay with Nurse. You will not mind, will you, dear?" he said, turning towards her. "You will be of more use than Alice now," he added.

"I will stay, certainly," replied Gertrude, and she returned at once to the chamber of death, to render what little assistance she could. Alice had given her the keys, and told her where to put the rings which she asked her to take from Mrs. Lester's finger herself and put away at once. There were two—the wedding-ring and a very thin chased keeper—and she put them into a small box, and placed it inside a drawer, which she at once locked, putting the key in her pocket. An hour or two after, when Nurse had left, she gave this key to John, who delivered it to Alice a few days afterwards.

As soon as the funeral was over, Alice unlocked the drawer. "Now, John," she said, "you must take the diamond ring, and I would rather you had it at once, before you returned to London. Where is it?" she exclaimed, as she opened the box and saw the two gold rings. "Have you taken it out?" she asked, feeling somewhat hurt that her brother should be so impatient to possess this heirloom.

"I have not touched the key since Gerty gave it me. She said she had put the rings into the drawer, and I have not thought of them since."

"Well, it certainly seems very strange, for it is not here," said Alice, as she carefully turned over the contents of the drawer.

"Are you sure mother had it on her finger?"

"I should have missed it if she had not," said Alice, confidently.

Everything was taken out of that drawer, and several others, but no ring could be found, and John had to depart for London without it, much to his sister's vexation.

The next day Nurse called to see Alice. "Oh, Nurse, did you see anything of a diamond ring when you were with mamma?"

"No, Miss. Miss Gertrude Harley took the rings off your mamma's finger, Miss, and I never saw anything of them. Have you asked her about it?"

"No; she has gone away with her aunt for a few days, so that I have not had the opportunity; but she told me that she had put everything into the corner drawer, so that it seems so strange this ring should be missing."

"It does indeed, Miss. I would ask Miss Harley about it as soon as possible."

Alice thought that Gertrude would be sure to pay her a visit as soon as she came back with her aunt; but when a fortnight passed, and she did not come, a strange doubt crept into her mind, and she resolved to wait no longer, but herself pay a visit to Gertrude.

Miss Harley was at home, the servant said, in answer to her question, and she went at once to Gertrude's room to tell her.

It was some minutes before Gertrude appeared, and then she seemed strangely hurried and agitated in her manner, Alice thought.

"I am afraid you must have thought me very unkind, Gerty, for not asking about Edward before this," she said, when the usual greetings were over.

"Oh, do not mention it," answered Gertrude quickly, turning crimson as she spoke.

"But, Gertrude, have you—has he—"

"Yes, yes, the money has been paid; do not say any more about it," she interrupted, and her agitation increased.

Alice was puzzled. "Did you put all mamma's rings into the corner drawer?" she asked, as she rose to leave.

"Yes."

But the answer was returned so absently, that, as Alice slowly retraced her steps homeward, the doubts which she had hoped to dispel by this visit grew almost into certainty. "Yes, it must be that," she soliloquised; "and yet I wonder what she can have done with it? She would not send it to Edward to dispose of, I think; neither would she offer it for sale in the neighbourhood. No wonder she did not care to come and see me with this on her conscience, or that she felt alarmed when the servant told her I had called. Poor John! this will be a greater blow to him than the loss of the ring, although I know he valued that very highly, because it has been in the family so many years. And Gertrude, too. I can't help pitying her, although she has acted so very wrongly. I must write and tell John all about it at once."

The letter was written that evening. In it Alice spoke of her suspicions as certainties, and her brother received them as such. It was a dreadful blow to him to hear that his Gertrude, in whom he placed such implicit trust, was guilty of such a crime; but his honest nature revolted at the thought of having any more communication with one who could act so basely, and the following day Gertrude received a parcel, which, on opening, she

found to contain all her letters and little gifts to John. In some dismay she wrote back, asking an explanation. A short answer was returned, referring her to her own conscience and her brother Edward.

"Edward, Edward! what can he have done?" exclaimed poor Gertrude, wringing her hands. "Oh, was the money too late after all? What can it be? what can John mean unless it is—yes, Alice may have heard what I am doing; if so, and John is too proud to accept me because of it, I will not mind." And she drew herself up haughtily as she prepared to pack up all the treasured trifles she had ever received from him. It was done at length, and her pride held out until the last knot was tied and it was all ready to be sent, then, as she saw it lying on the table, her firmness all gave way, and she sobbed, as though her heart would break, for upwards of an hour. Then the string was slowly untied again, and,

slipping two letters into one envelope, she replaced the empty one in her desk. Something she must keep; the rest—everything—she would give up, but an envelope he would not miss—would not think she had kept back, and locking her desk more jealously than ever now it contained but this one treasure, she went down-stairs, and despatched the parcel at once, that John might receive it without delay.

In spite of his stoicism, John was greatly disappointed when he received it. He had hoped that the affair would have had a very different termination after all—that the ring would have been found or its absence accounted for; whereas the few words Gertrude had written did but confirm her guilt.

"What I have done I was forced to do, to save my brother from ruin. Keep my secret, I implore you. Gertrude." This was all she had said.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS CRISIS IN SPAIN.



ARICATURES are not logical definitions of the sentiments of a people; but they are, nevertheless, surprisingly accurate indexes of what those sentiments may be. Two years ago it would have been worth a man's life to exhibit in Madrid any composition, whether of pen or pencil, tending to bring discredit on Church or Queen. But to-day, not two hundred yards from where this is written, the present writer has formed one of a laughing crowd, assembled before a series of cartoons, whose moral, however indirectly taught, is that monarchy in Spain is no more, and that the Romish priest is no better than he ought to be. One of these pictures represents the principal pretenders to the vacant throne as the world, the flesh, and the devil, exhibiting the late queen (not unsuccessfully) as the second of these personifications. Another cartoon depicts the Roman Catholic bishops receiving their pay from the minister of Grace and Justice (or, as the cartoon has it, grace *without* justice), and handing it on behind their backs to the Carlists. Underneath the picture is the motto: "If you breed crows they will peck your eyes out."

A straw will show the wind, and it is undoubtedly a serious thing for the priests and the Carlists of Spain to have such exhibitions as these permitted, and popularly approved of, in the streets of the capital. Very many indications give them a still more profound significance. There are those who do not scruple to say that Roman Catholicism, as a state religion, is dead

already, and that its actual interment is only a question of time. It is even said—but this can scarcely be vouched for—that in some places in Madrid the priest dare not show his face in his priestly attire of black cassock and shovel hat, and that but a very little would induce the populace to rise *en masse* against their late religious teachers, and satiate their hatred for them with their blood.

Such measures as these are of course to be most earnestly deprecated, but the actual fact that Spain as a nation is throwing off her Roman Catholicism cannot but be deeply interesting to English Christians. English Christians have already had a considerable hand in the work. The long course of systematic repression of thought practised by the Romish Church, and its barbarous cruelty in former times, have no doubt been the primary cause of this alienation of a people from its ancient faith; but if Protestantism, and not atheism or indifference, is to succeed Catholicism, then England will have had a great share in the glorious result. It was by the aid of an English army, and through the genius of our great English commander, the Duke of Wellington, that the people of the Peninsula succeeded in expelling Napoleon and his dynasty from their country. The Spaniards have therefore much to thank us for already. But they will have much more to be thankful for, if by any aid of ours the pure light of the Gospel can be brought to shine in the midst of a land hitherto sunk in popish idolatry, and defrauded both of this world's

goods and of the hopes of eternity by the arts of a rapacious priesthood.

The position of the religious crisis in Spain at the present moment is much as that of the man whose eyes our Saviour opened, but who was at first ignorant of the character of Him whose power had relieved his bodily disorder. "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" may be put into the mouth of many a Spaniard at the present conjuncture. The Spaniard is aware that the Romish priest has deceived him; that the winking images, the bleeding wafers, the sham relics, and the posturing of a perfunctory priest, cannot save his soul. He breathes the free air of political and religious liberty; he can express as he pleases his want of belief in Rome, and need not fear lest he should be handed over, as in ancient days, to the Holy Office, or should be visited with the milder, but not less deterrent, punishments of the late government. But while he has this absence of faith in the old religion, it by no means follows that he is prepared to replace the old faith by a new one. The simple truths of the Gospel, familiar to us from our childhood, have been hitherto studiously concealed from him, and unless by some agency or other this ignorance can be enlightened, it is hard to say what the end of the matter may be.

Happily, the work is in the hands of One who finds his own instruments and means better than we can do. Amongst living agents, Mr. Tugwell, the British chaplain at Seville, and Señor Carrasco (who is supported by the Foreign Aid Society, through an evangelical society of Geneva) at Madrid, are, perhaps, doing the most conspicuous work; but many others are also labouring assiduously and successfully. At St. Sebastian, close to the French frontier, a retired Spanish merchant is doing much, especially in completing the translation of the Bible into the Basque language, which is spoken in those parts. At Burgos, where, in the early days of the revolution, the governor was assassinated in the cathedral, an active colporteur is engaged; and at Barcelona, Saragossa, Malaga, and other places, there are also zealous workers. By these persons evangelical tracts, many of which are especially intended for the young, are distributed at fairs, markets, hotels, railway-stations, and other likely places; meetings are held for the exposition of the Word of God and prayer; the cottages of the agricultural villages are visited, and Sunday and other schools are carried on. Of the details of these works, a further opportunity of speaking may, perhaps, be allowed. But before entering upon these, it will be necessary to call attention to the great fact that the Word of God itself is now circulated in Spain without let or hindrance.

Before the expulsion of the late queen, it was

contrary to the law to introduce into Spain any books printed in Spanish; and however this restriction may have been evaded with respect to other books, it was enforced with the utmost stringency against Bibles. The British and Foreign Bible Society, however, got permission, in 1855, to print 5,000 Bibles and 5,000 Testaments in Spanish. These Bibles, when so printed, were submitted in due course to the censor, who, unfortunately, happened to be a Roman Catholic bishop, and naturally declared the book unfit for circulation. This was particularly unkind, as with the object of conciliating the censorship, a Roman Catholic version had been adopted; but against the censorship there was no appeal, and therefore the 10,000 Bibles remained in the cellars of the printer unread, until in 1867 the society obtained permission to transport them to Bayonne, just on the other side of the Pyrenees. There they remained until the erection of the present government, and the consequent accession of religious liberty. As soon as the good news of this fact arrived, back went the Bibles to Spain; and they have now been entirely distributed there.

It is the more necessary to mention this fact, because the British and Foreign Bible Society has been accused of circulating Roman Catholic versions of the Scriptures in Spain. As to the general policy of circulating adulterated versions of the Scriptures, this is not the place to discuss that question; and however the writer of these remarks may disagree with the Society upon it, it is but just to say that the only copies of the Romish version which have been distributed in Spain by their agency have been those referred to above as having suffered imprisonment at Bayonne. All other copies have been printed from a Protestant translation.

Since the revolution, the Bible Society has also had a most important share in the distribution of the Word of God in Spain. At first its premises in Madrid, although convenient, were of a modest and contracted appearance; but the demand for the Scriptures has been so great, as to render larger premises necessary, and these are at this moment in process of being fitted up. They are on the ground-floor of the Calle de Précios, a principal street of Madrid, opening into its chief public place, the Puerta del Sol, or "Gate of the Sun." The sun's rays are too powerful in these southern climes to permit that amount of window-dressing which the milder temperature of northern cities admires in shops; but the shop-window of the Bible Society in Madrid is not without its charms, in a neatly-arranged pyramid of the different editions of the Scriptures obtainable within. Around the shop are pictures from Bible history, intended for children, and below the shop is a large underground warehouse, where the abundant

stock is stored, and here may be seen in masses the new Spanish Bibles, destined, let us hope, to carry the news of salvation to many a thirsty soul.

The editions at present published are—(1) a handsome large-sized Bible, sold for twelve reals, (about three shillings); (2) the same Bible less handsomely bound, for ten reals; (3) "The People's Bible," in good type and paper, for four reals (about one shilling)—of this Bible more than 2,000 have been sold in the two months which have elapsed since its publication; (4) a small Testament for two reals, or about sixpence—of this edition, nearly 6,000 have been sold; (5) the New Testament in parts, and the Book of Psalms, at about one penny the part; (6) an edition of St. John, in raised letters for the blind. Having no official or other connection whatever with the Bible Society, the writer feels bound to say that their arrangements for supplying the Scriptures cheaply, and in a trustworthy form, to the Spanish people, are most excellent, and far beyond what might be expected in a country where, two years ago, the Word of God was contraband, and where even now no Spanish books printed in a foreign country are permitted to enter. Much is no doubt due to the efforts of Mr. Curie, the Society's agent in Madrid.

Other societies, besides those mentioned, are also engaged in work in Spain. The Spanish Evangelisation Society, whose head-quarters are in Edinburgh, particularly cares for the progress of the Gospel in Seville, and an American society has also agents there. A committee of English gentlemen have also distributed the Scriptures largely in Spain. They adopt, to a certain extent, the useful practice of

distributing the Scriptures in portions, and up to the end of June last they had distributed no less than 200,000 of these sections. Whether the distribution was by gift, or by sale, the writer is ignorant.

There can be no doubt in the mind of any earnest Christian that all this is in the right direction. The Reformation in England, and the Reformation in Germany, were both carried out by putting into the people's own hands the Word of God in their own tongue; and the more there is of the Word, the less of dependence upon individual men, the more likely is the cause of Christ in Spain to progress. Only let us not anticipate too much at first. If any are looking for too great things in this country, they should undoubtedly moderate their hopes. The extreme antipathy of the Spaniard to do anything in a hurry has almost passed into a proverb. The languages, of which there are at least three (not reckoning Portuguese), are another obstacle to rapid progress. Neither the Basque nor the Catalonian will understand the present Spanish version. The population, moreover, is only about twelve millions, scattered over a country four times as large as England. The distances between the towns are consequently vast, the means of communication slow and infrequent, and the centres of population separated by barren and pathless mountains. In addition to the disadvantages of nature, Romanism has done its best to pauperise the Spaniards, and shut them up in a dense ignorance. From that ignorance they have now the prospect of being freed. Let us earnestly hope that the prospect may become a happy reality.

LITTLE ELLIE.

BY EDITH WALFORD.

LITTLE Ellie was very much given to wandering away by herself, and frightening her parents. She was generally found a mile or so from her home, with a doll and some wild flowers, seated on a bank, as happy as a princess. The people round there had mostly heard of a child that was celebrated for running away from home, and basking in the sunshine; and, so, when a ploughboy, or a farm-labourer, or a dairymaid, saw a little girl in a pretty frock and pinafore, and no bonnet on, they said immediately, "Well, I declare; there's that child again that lives at the white house; she's always running away," and then the good-natured ploughboy, or farm-labourer, or dairymaid would go up to little Ellie, and say, "What! run away again, little missie! Well, you

must come with me," and a forefinger was held out for little missie to take hold of. Little missie got up, and hugging her doll in one arm, and grasping her pinafore full of flowers, tightly in one little dimpled hand, held out the other to grasp the kindly proffered finger, and trotted along demurely, and rather sadly, towards home.

When little Ellie got home, and mamma was scolding and hugging her at the same time, she would ask, with a desperate sigh, that was very large indeed for so small a body, "Oh, mamma! why will you live in a nasty house, when there is such a beautiful sky, and such flowers, and such pretty music-birds?"

Ellie always called the singing-birds music-birds.

"Ah, little one!" the tender mother would answer;

"you only know the very sunny side of life; you don't understand the misery of rain and snow to those who have no homes."

"Oh, mamma," said Ellie, clasping her hands, "the rain, that rain that comes patter patter against my windows, and sounds like—oh, mamma, almost as pretty as music! Oh, mamma, mamma! the rain's lovely. See how the ducks like it, and the little boys in the puddles. Oh, it must be beautiful!" and the little thing fairly clapped her hands in an ecstasy.

Mamma laughed, of course; then she said, "What do you think of the cold snow, Ellie?" and she gave a little shiver that made Ellie laugh.

"Oh, mamma, you *funny* mamma!" she said; "why, the snow would be the best of all. Just think how the robin redbreast likes it. I should like to be a robin redbreast, and hop on to people's windows, and see the fathers and mothers and the little children having their breakfasts. I should stand on the window-sill, and peck at the glass till some one let me in. I dare say it would be a little girl with curly hair like dolly's, don't you mamma? And then I should hop about the table-cloth, and on to their shoulders, and make them laugh and be so pleased. Oh, mamma! why the snow's warm, you know; nurse told me so."

"Yes," said mamma; "the snow is warm, but the atmosphere that produces snow is cold; and if you were to sleep one night in the snow, Ellie, you would, perhaps, be frozen to death before the morning."

But, Ellie was incredulous, and thought she must be right, although she did not like to say so. And at night, when she went to bed, somehow—of course I can't say how—a fairy got hold of her, and took her somewhere, and where I am now going to tell you.

Ellie was sleeping peacefully and sweetly, when she felt a light tap upon her arm, which was lying outside the bedclothes. She opened her eyes, and saw the tiniest little woman you can imagine, much smaller than Ellie herself, and yet she was a woman, and she was dressed very prettily, and had a little wand. Ellie was not at all afraid of the fairy, but she was very surprised and charmed with her appearance.

"Oh, dear, how pretty you are!" she said; "I never saw any one half so beautiful."

"You come with me," the lady said, in a voice that was as sweet as the tinkle of a silver bell.

"Come with you?" said Ellie, opening her blue eyes very wide in astonishment.

"Yes," said the little lady; "now, at once."

Ellie forgot mother and father and all—that was part of the enchantment, you know—and she went at once; and almost before she could think, found herself in a very large, low, gorgeous hall, lighted with innumerable lamps of all colours, and peopled with creatures of the size of Ellie's friend. A silver

fountain sparkled in the centre—a tiny band was playing in a gallery, and at the far end of the hall, gay little ladies and gentlemen were disporting themselves with merry dances.

"Do not speak," said the fairy; "if you do you will never go home again."

At the mention of the word *home*, the thought of father and mother and all returned, and little Ellie's heart was almost ready to burst at the idea that she might, perhaps, never again see the white house she had been so glad to leave.

"Nod your head when you mean yes, and shake it when you mean no," said the fairy; "and now I am going to ask you some questions."

The little fairy stood before Ellie in a very serious and even solemn manner, and stared at her fully a minute before she began.

"So," she said at last, "you think you should like to live out of doors always?"

Ellie's head nodded very vigorously.

"Always?"

Another nod.

"Even in the winter?"

Another nod, more vigorous than the second.

While she stood the fairy waved her wand about. Suddenly the whole scene changed. The dancers turned into skaters; the smooth floor changed into a smoother mass of ice; and the little creatures whirled about in the most enchanting manner. Trees sprang up laden with snow, and little Ellie alone remained the same child, with the same arms and legs and eyes and mouth, and the same capabilities of feeling cold. Oh, my! how she did shiver. The wind blew her little night-dress about, and lifted her hair from her shoulders, and then almost whistled down her back. It was so cold! how she did wish herself back again in her warm, snug bed, between the sheets and blankets that kept out the cold so thoroughly. Hers was such a nice little bed, too, with curtains as white as this dreadful snow she was standing on, and which was hanging in crystals on the little trees.

The fairy could certainly not have felt the cold, or she would not have stood there smiling and shining so merrily.

"Well, do you like it?" she asked, in a most provoking tone.

Little Ellie shook her head as vigorously as she had nodded it before.

"Would you like to be a robin red-breast?" was the next question.

Another very large nod; and Ellie almost forgot the cold at the idea of being such a beautiful bird. She was herself touched with the wand this time; she felt her legs shrink and shrink and shrink, and her arms turn into little wings; and then she looked down with two bright bird eyes and found a pretty little red breast. It was not nearly so cold; she looked round and saw a window (just what she hoped for),

a bright fire burning inside, and a group of noisy children round a breakfast-table, with a hot, tired-looking mother at the top, and a quiet-looking father opposite, reading the newspaper. There was the very window-sill outside you always see in pictures; all the fairy men and women had vanished, and Ellie was alone, a little robin red-breast, outside a window, shivering, where all inside was bright and warm.

Tap, tap, tap, with a tiny beak. Oh, what a roar there was inside!

"Well I never," said Tom, with his mouth so full of bread and butter that it dropped out of his mouth as he spoke; "well, I never! there's a robin red-breast."

Then Will burst in, "So there is; I'm blest!"

"Oh, the dear little creature!" cried the girls. "Bring him in, Tom."

They opened the window, and instead of waiting for the bird to hop in quietly of itself, Tom and Will dragged it in by main force and then fought for it inside. Poor little Ellie! how she did long and pant for her home; how she hated to be a bird! One moment her life was nearly squeezed out by Tom's rough hand, and the next her little legs were almost lost in the firm grasp of the tenacious Will. As for the girls, they stood on chairs and peeped over the boys' shoulders, and wanted to stroke the little thing and to rescue it from the cruel boys. The father, who was very quiet generally, could not endure to see a little bird so ill-treated, and, to the great astonishment of Tom and Will, he sent one to one side of the room and another to the other, while he rescued the poor fluttering bird from its torture.

"Poor little thing!" he said, in a voice that Ellie thought sounded like her own papa's. "Poor little thing! I could almost fancy I heard you sobbing." He took some crumbs and strewed them on the table-cloth; then he put the robin down. But Ellie was not hungry, she did not want to eat; so the kind gentleman took the little bird in his hand and sat down by the fire and warmed it. But it had been so pulled about by the children that—oh dear, oh—it died!

No it didn't; yes it did. No, how could that be? Little Ellie woke in the morning in her bed just the same as she went to bed, only her hair was much more tumbled, and her face considerably redder.

"Oh mamma, mamma!" she cried out, "where are you, mamma?"

Her mamma rushed to her in a fright, for she thought she was ill.

"Oh mamma, dear," little Ellie said in a frightened tone, "I've been in the ice and the snow, and I've been—oh! I've been a robin red-breast; and oh—h—h—it is so dreadful!"

"What! dreadful to be a robin red-breast?" asked her mamma, laughing, for she guessed she had been dreaming.

"Oh, yes, dreadful! and so is ice, and so is snow, and so—oh, mamma, fairies are dreadful creatures!" and Ellie clung to her mother's neck as if she were the only creature that was not dreadful in the world. Then she told the mother all the story of her dream; and ever after that, when she was tempted to go out and stay away from home because the weather was fine, she thought there might come a time when frost and snow would be the only miserable bed for a stray little girl to sleep on, and determined to stay in her nice snug home until mamma chose to send her out with a nurse or take her herself.

So you see little Ellie's dream was of some service to her; and we hope it will be of some service to the boys and girls who read it now, or else it would not be much use telling it, would it?

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

30. What runaway servant was told by a messenger from God to go back to her mistress?

31. To whom was the advice given, "Break off thy sins by righteousness?"

32. Where does Scripture tell us that Satan was cast out of heaven for his pride?

33. Where did Luke join Paul and begin his travels with the great Apostle?

34. Why is it said in Matthew iii. 16, that when Jesus was baptised he "went up straightway out of the water?"

35. What were the names of the chief Egyptian magicians who imitated some of the miracles God commanded Moses to perform before Pharaoh?

36. In the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas, why did Barnabas wish to take Mark, when he had before left them?

37. Why did our Saviour ask Philip particularly where they could buy bread for the multitude? (John vi. 5.)

38. A king who purchased all the land of his people, then moved them from their homes to other parts of the country, and made them till the land as his servants?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 48.

21. Stephen, at his trial. Acts vii. 56.

22. Their clothes waxed not old. Deut. viii. 4.

23. 2 Kings xxiii. 13. It is called "the Mount of Corruption," and the origin of the name is given in the same verse.

24. Jacob. Genesis xxix. 12.

25. Genesis xxxvi. 24

26. Potipherah, the priest of On; his grandsons were Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Genesis xli. 45.

27. 2 Chronicles xxiv. 22.

28. Solomon. 1 Chronicles xxii. 9.

29. Jeremiah xl. 14, &c.